

REMARKS

Claims 1-52 are pending in the application. Claims 1-52 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claims 1-52 stand rejected in the Office Action at hand under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fujimoto et al. (Skew-Free Parallel Optical Transmission Systems, IEEE, pages 1822-1831, October 1998) (hereinafter "Fujimoto"). Responses to these rejections are presented below in turn. No claims are being amended. No new matter is being introduced.

Responding first the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, independent claim 1 was amended in the Amendment filed August 2, 2004 (hereinafter referred to as "previous Amendment") to recite, "a demultiplexer to map SONET/SDH frames onto a plurality of data channels having an aggregate data rate equivalent to the data rate of the SONET/SDH frames." Independent claims 16, 17, 29, and 38 were also amended in the previous Amendment to include similar limitations. Support for the claim amendments is found in the specification as originally filed at least at page 7, lines 20-23 and page 12, lines 8-10. In particular, at page 7, lines 20-23, the specification states, "certain SONET framing bytes on each channel are overwritten with a frame marker consisting of characters defined for the code. The purpose of the frame markers is to aid the de-skewing circuitry at the receiver end ... to realign the frames." At page 12, lines 8-10, the specification states, "[i]f a frame pulse is present, the first three SONET A1 bytes on each channel are overwritten with codewords that form a frame delimiter." By overwriting the framing bytes, which include the A1 bytes, the aggregate data rate of the data channels onto which the demultiplexer maps the SONET/SDH frames is equivalent to the data rate of the SONET/SDH frames. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, paragraph 1 is improper and should be withdrawn with regard to the independent claims and, in turn, the dependent claims.

Responding next to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), Applicants' invention as recited in the preamble of claim 1 is directed to a system for transferring synchronous optical network/synchronous digital hierarchy (SONET/SDH) frames between two nodes. Claim 1, as amended in the previous Amendment and having support in the specification as originally filed as described in the paragraph immediately above, recites, "a demultiplexer to map SONET/SDH

frames onto a plurality of data channels having an aggregate data rate equivalent to the data rate of the SONET/SDH frames.”

On pages 16 and 17, Part 4 (“Response to Arguments”) of the Office Action at hand, Examiner provides first, second, and third rationales for disagreeing with Applicants’ Remarks in the previous Amendment. Applicants respond to the first, second, and third rationales in turn below. By way of responding to these first, second, and third rationales, Applicants are also responding to the rejections in Part 3 of the Office Action at hand on pages 3 through 16.

The first rationale presented in Part 4 of the Office Action at hand is that the limitation added in the previous Amendment (e.g., claim 1, “data channels having an aggregate data rate equivalent to the data rate of the SONET/SDH frames”) was not supported in the original specification. As described above, Applicants respectfully submit that this first rationale should be withdrawn.

The second rationale presented in Part 4 of the Office Action at hand is that Fujimoto in Fig. 4 discloses the limitation added in the previous Amendment. In Fig. 4, Fujimoto inputs Channels 1-19 and an additional channel, “A” (indicated as channel “156 MHz,” to a transmitter module in Fig. 5). This “A” or “156 MHz” channel is described by Fujimoto on page 1823, right column, first paragraph, as a new data channel (i.e., 20th channel) that is added and filled with auxiliary data, “A bits,” and the A bits are multiplexed into the 19 data channels so that five multiplexed output data streams each contain an A bit. Because a 20th channel is added to the 19 data channels, Fujimoto does not disclose every limitation of claim 1 (“data channels having an aggregate data rate equivalent to the data rate of the SONET/SDH frames”), and Applicants respectfully submit that Fujimoto’s teaching of adding a 20th data channel to the 19 data channels teaches away from Applicants’ claimed invention.

The third rationale presented in Part 4 of the Office Action at hand is that the claims do not distinguish over Fujimoto, even if the Examiner were to accept Applicants’ assertion that the Fujimoto aggregate data rate of output channels increases as compared to the input channels as a result of adding the extra channels. In response, Applicants direct attention to Fujimoto’s Fig. 4 in which channels 1-19 represent SONET/SDH frames. Because Fujimoto adds the 20th channel, named “A” in Fig. 4 and “156 MHz” in Fig. 5, Applicants respectfully argue that the invention as recited in claim 1 (“data channels having an aggregate data rate equivalent to the data rate of the

SONET/SDH frames”) distinguish prima facie over Fujimoto. Further, on page 1824, left column, first paragraph, in reference to Fig. 6, Fujimoto discloses, “[i]n the proposed method, a new sequence is added to the parallel data sequences.” Thus, such disclosure further supports the arguments presented immediately above.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 as amended in the previous Amendment should be allowable over Fujimoto under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and that the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Independent claims 6, 16, 17, 29, and 38 were amended in the previous Amendment to include similar limitations and, therefore, should be allowed for similar reasons over Fujimoto under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

For at least the same reasons, dependent claims 2-15, 18-28, 30-37, and 40-52 should be allowable over Fujimoto under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) for at least the same reasons.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims (claims 1-52) are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By Mark B. Solomon
Mark B. Solomon
Registration No. 44,348
Telephone: (978) 341-0036
Facsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133

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